Rationale and Development of the Move More North Carolina: Recommended Standards for After-School Physical Activity

Justin B. Moore, PhD, MS
Department of Public Health
Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University

Suzanne Lazorick, MD, MPH
Department of Pediatrics & Department of Public Health
Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University

Jimmy Newkirk, BS
Physical Activity & Nutrition Branch
Division of Public Health
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Lori Schneider, MA, CHES
Physical Activity & Nutrition Branch
Division of Public Health
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Abstract

Purpose: To describe the rationale and procedure employed in developing the Move More North Carolina: Recommended Standards for After-School Physical Activity released state-wide in April 2009.

Background: In NC, approximately 152,000 children (< 18yrs) are served in after-school programs.

Children served are at highest risk for physical inactivity (e.g. racial/ethnic minorities, impoverished areas)

The Standards were developed by the Move More After-School Collaborative: a partnership of officials of after-school providers, public health personnel, and scientists.

Standards can facilitate: 1) programs providing enjoyable, safe and age appropriate PA; 2) family involvement, community partnership and increase access to resources for PA.

Methods: Based on current research and expert opinion informed by: Online survey, Focus Groups, Literature review, Consensus Panel, and External expert review and, and the Move More After-School Collaborative.

Recommended best practices can be applied in any program type, and are included for the following categories: Time/Intensity, Qualified Staff/Training, Curriculum, Program Size, Facilities, Equipment, and Evaluation.

Conclusions: The development of The Standards can serve as a model for the collaborative development of similar standards in other states.

Introduction

• North Carolina has a movement called, "Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina" to make it easier for North Carolinians to eat healthy and be physically active.

• As part of legislation, standards have been developed and recommended for schools for both nutritional offerings and PA for children through health grade.

• Until 2009 there were no existing PA recommendations or guidelines for the after-school setting.

Initial Adoption of The Standards

• Each MMC partner has joint ownership and commitment for implementing The Standards.

• Partners are now aligning efforts to support statewide implementation.

• Examples of early adoption by partners are listed below:

  • The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, an academically-focused after-school provider, partnered with ECU to create After-School Energizers, short activities (10 minutes) adapted from tools developed for classroom use.

  • The NC Division of Public Health included The Standards in the Eat Smart, Move More Community Grants program, a competitive funding opportunity for health departments.

  • The NC CAP Afterschool Funders Group, a group of state and federal funders of after-school programs is including The Standards in their Afterschool Funders Work Group Standards Manual.

  • The 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers have all included The Standards in staff trainings and annual meetings.

  • The NC Center for After-School Programs and NC AfterSchool Coalition are including PA-specific training sessions in their annual conferences.

Method

Timeline included formation of an inter-organizational collaborative and a multiphase needs assessment:

The Move More After-School Collaborative

In the summer of 2007, a meeting of multidisciplinary stake holders was convened to address the topic of PA in after-school settings. This group would eventually become the Move More After-School Collaborative (MMAC). Partners represented groups with interest in child health and/or after-school programs, such as after-school service providers, education advocates, health professionals, and researchers (See Table 1). MMAC determined that PA standards were warranted and agreed that after-school programs offer opportunities for increasing PA for many children.

Multi-phase Needs Assessment

Phase 1: Survey. A survey (N=222) was conducted of after-school service providers to identify barriers and supports for providing PA. Barriers commonly cited were: 1) homework time, 2) staffing (training and numbers), 3) equipment and/or supplies, and 4) location/facility constraints. Resources most commonly cited included: 1) equipment and/or supplies, 2) programming ideas and 3) staff training.

Phase 2: Literature Review. A systematic review was conducted to synthesize scientific literature regarding PA in after-school programs. Results were compiled into an annotated bibliography.

Phase 3: Focus Groups. Three focus groups were held with service providers. Findings indicated that: (1) barriers to PA in after-school programs are known, common across types of programs and easily identified; (2) there is a need to determine what constitutes quality PA in this setting; and (3) staff need to understand how to provide PA in different types of spaces and need to learn about community resources.

Following phases 1-3, a proposed set of standards was drafted consisting of seven program components (Figure 1).

Expert Opinion

Phase 4: Consensus Panel. A consensus panel was convened to review the draft standards and discuss implementation. The 29-member panel represented various after-school programs, coalitions and networks as well as public schools, public health, recreation and parks and parent volunteer organizations. Panel members felt The Standards needed to be flexible, taking into account the various types and settings of programs. The Standards were edited based on the feedback.

Phase 5: Expert Review. Nineteen professionals, external to the development process, reviewed The Standards. Reviewers were chosen based on their role and expertise related to physical activity promotion and/or after-school programs.

Figure 1. The Standards

Table 1. Move More After-School Collaborative Organizational Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-H Youth Development, North Carolina State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Carolina University, Brody School of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina AfterSchool Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Alliance of Boys &amp; Girls Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice &amp; Delinquency Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Support Services Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Healthy Schools Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Physical Activity &amp; Nutrition Branch, Children &amp; Youth Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Parent &amp; Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Recreation &amp; Park Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WakeMed Corporate and Community Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA’s of North Carolina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

In Conclusion, The Standards:  

• Represent the collective work of a diverse collaborative.

• Offer evidence-based best practices and recommendations.

• Have the potential to increase physical activity among thousands of NC youth.

• Require further evaluation to evaluate impact.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [h01- DP001126 to JBM]. This work is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.